

## **Minutes from the Dutchess County Complete Count Committee Meeting on Feb. 16, 2020**

The Dutchess County Complete Count Committee held a meeting on Feb. 13 at the Dutchess County Mental Health Center, 230 North Road, Poughkeepsie.

Committee members attending were Jonathan Bix, Jennifer Drake, Mario Johnson, Tom Lawrence, Gabriela Vega-Matthews, John Penney, Seema Rizvi, Sarah Salem representing Brian Riddell and Christine Sergent. Also in attendance were Eoin Wrafter, Commissioner of Dutchess County Planning and Development, and Isis Benitez, Community Health Promoter at Planned Parenthood of Greater New York.

Penney updated the committee on outreach efforts since the last meeting, which included a presentation to the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council. He said the Complete Count Committee, with the help of U.S. Census officials, is on target to do presentations to 30 municipalities by mid-March. He highlighted the fact that census materials were placed in the packets of 127 people from 45 countries who became U.S. citizens at a recent naturalization ceremony at the Family Partnership Center in Poughkeepsie. He also said he has been in contact with the Art Effect in Poughkeepsie about doing videos related to the census.

Bix said his organization, Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson, is continuing to go door-to-door in hard-to-count areas, including the City of Poughkeepsie. They have knocked on more than 1,000 doors and have collected information from a few hundred people. They are asking people to take the “census pledge,” agreeing to fill out the form once it becomes available.

Drake said grant awards have been made through the Hudson Valley Census 2020 Fund, which is supporting efforts to reach hard-to-count communities. The organizations of several Dutchess County Complete Count Committee members were among those receiving grants.

Benitez said Planned Parenthood continues to do outreach. She also said she attended the Poughkeepsie Healthy Black and Latinx Coalition meeting earlier that day and the census was a topic at that meeting. She said it will be larger part of the discussion at the March meeting.

Rizvi said several big events are coming up, including the Mid Hudson Islamic Association's "All for One, One for All, United We Stand, Divided We Fall" event on Sunday, March 8, at the Fishkill Recreation Center. The Complete Count Committee will make a presentation at this event and will have a table with census materials to distribute.

Tom Lawrence said all libraries in Dutchess County are on board with public access to computers for the purpose of completing the census survey starting on or about March 15. But he pointed out that the libraries and others would like clarification regarding when people who get their mail at a P.O. Box will get a communication from the census. He noted that the census does not deliver to P.O. Boxes. Committee members agreed that more information about the census' timetable is needed. Lawrence also said there will be a designated time when people can get help with the census in Spanish at the Poughkeepsie Library. Penney pointed out that that census has different toll-free numbers for more than a dozen languages. That information can be found here:

[https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2019\\_18.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2019_18.html)

Vega-Matthews said an event she held at Marist College drew dozens of people and focused on raising awareness and getting volunteers to go out and talk about the census to minority populations, particularly Latinos. Karen Barnes of the U.S. Census Bureau was among the speakers at the event.

Salem said Dutchess Outreach is including messaging about the census as part of its regular outreach efforts. Salem also said the organization will be giving out census materials when it conducts a food security survey in the City of Poughkeepsie in April.

Sergent said the North East Community Center has received some foundation funding and is planning a "community engagement" forum about the census in Amenia. She also is considering holding another one at yet-to-be-determined location, perhaps Dover, which is another hard-to-count area. Sergent also took census materials – fliers, trifolds and magnets – to distribute to the northeast quadrant of the county.

Johnson said he is continuing to work in the schools and that Superintendent Dr. Eric Rosser has been supportive. Johnson said he also

is working with Nubian Directions II, Inc., which has received a grant to do census outreach. Under this initiative, it intends to do door-to-door canvassing in the hard-to-count areas of Poughkeepsie, provide assistance to those who have questions about how to fill out the census and distribute materials at various community event.

Wrafter said census materials are being distributed by a number of county departments, including the Office for the Aging, the Department of Behavioral & Community Health and the Department of Community and Family Services. Census materials also are available at the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Offices.

Wrafter said the date is rapidly approaching for nonprofits to apply for the census funds the state is providing through the counties. Dutchess County has been allocated \$331,163 through this program; 75 percent of the grant proceeds (\$248,372) must be allocated to state-approved nonprofits. All nonprofits must be pre-qualified by the state as well. The application to the county must be received by Feb. 17. The county will then give its overall plan to the state by March 2.